

### The Law of the Firstborn: part 3

In part one, we looked at the special rights that the firstborn son.

- He was entitled to a double portion of his father's estate.
- He was the designated successor of his father.
- He would inherit the role of priest to his family,
- He embodied the reproductive vigor of the father

In part two, we looked at Adam as God's firstborn and Israel as succeeding to Adam's failed mission.

Jacob (Israel) was selected to fulfill the role of firstborn.

Genesis 28:13-15 NKJV 13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. 14 "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 15 "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

#### **Discussion Question: How has God endowed the blessings of the firstborn on Jacob?**

Jacob must wrestle with God for the blessing!

Genesis 32:26-29 NKJV 26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" 27 So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." 28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

Even when God took Jacob and his family into Egypt; the blessing was there.

Genesis 46:2-3 NKJV 2 Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." 3 So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.

Despite their slavery in Egypt, God continued to bless Israel.

Exodus 1:7 NKJV 7 But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

#### **Discussion Question: How was Israel, the firstborn of God, a blessing to Egypt? How are the Jewish people a blessing to the nations that welcome them?**

But Pharaoh didn't see the blessing; he only saw the threat.

Exodus 1:8-10 NKJV 8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; 10 "come, let us deal shrewdly

with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land."

And so, the battle for the control of the firstborn begins.

Exodus 4:22-23 NKJV 22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. 23 "So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

God supernaturally strengthens Pharaoh's stamina to follow his own inclination.

Exodus 4:21 NKJV 21 And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.

Harden: #2388, Chazaq meaning to fasten or strengthen, or bind.

Pharaoh makes his heart heavy.

Exodus 8:15 NKJV 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

Harden: #3513, Kavod meaning to make or be heavy or weighty.

Those who deliberately reject the truth of God will be strengthened in their delusion.

Romans 1:18-20 NKJV 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

God had certainly demonstrated to Pharaoh his authority and power, but Pharaoh rejected it.

Romans 1:24-25 NKJV 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Sin will be revealed to be utterly sinful.

Romans 7:12-14 NKJV 12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. 13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin..

### **Discussion Question: How were we in slavery to sin like Israel was in slavery to Egypt?**

Israel had to act in order to avoid the consequences of the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn.

Exodus 12:12-13 NKJV 12 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13

'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

The sacrifice of the Passover lamb is the threshold covenant sacrifice. God is reinstated to His proper place in the home, and Israel is installed as the firstborn.

Exodus 13:11-13 NKJV 11 "And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, 12 "that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the LORD'S. 13 "But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

During the redemption process, if a son asks his father about the redemption of the firstborn, the father is to tell him about their redemption from Egypt.

Exodus 13:14-15 NKJV 14 "So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 15 'And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.'

The redemption of the firstborn is compared with the wearing of the tefillin.

Exodus 13:16 NKJV 16 "It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

God tells them not to delay bringing the offering of the firstborn.

Exodus 22:29-30 NKJV 29 "You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. 30 "Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.

It is interesting that a son is circumcised on the eighth day to be brought into the covenant promise of Abraham.

Genesis 17:10-12 NKJV 10 "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 "and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 "He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.

The redemption of the firstborn son or the firstborn of an unclean animal is to be done after one month.

Numbers 18:16 NKJV 16 "And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old, according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

The firstborn have been placed at a higher level sanctity. The commentary in [The Stone Edition Chumash](#) states that:

The firstborn had always been the ones to perform God's service, but the Plague of the Firstborn placed them on an even higher level of holiness because the Jewish firstborn, too, would have died had God not shown them mercy, and that gave Him exclusive claim to their service. Logically, it should have been forbidden for them to engage in mundane activity, just as sacred animals may not be worked or shorn. The five-shekel redemption price would remove this higher degree of holiness, but the firstborn would still retain the right to perform the sacrificial service.<sup>1</sup>

The firstborn are the ones who bring the sacrifices for the covenant ratification ceremony.

Exodus 24:4-6 NKJV 4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. 6 And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

This all changed when the children of Israel built and worshiped the golden calf.

Exodus 32:1 NKJV 1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

They asked for other gods, plural, that they could see and follow!

Exodus 32:5-6 NKJV 5 So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD." 6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Since bringing the offerings is the responsibility of the firstborn the implication is that the firstborn brought the offerings to the golden calf. God had every right to disinherit Israel as His firstborn!

Exodus 32:9-10 NKJV 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! 10 "Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

Moses appealed to God for mercy based on His selection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Exodus 32:13 NKJV 13 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'"

The Levites answered Moses' call for judgment.

Exodus 32:25-27 NKJV 25 Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD'S side-come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. 27 And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'"

Because the firstborn failed to resist the sin of the worshiping the golden calf, they lost the right of the firstborn.

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<sup>1</sup> The Stone Edition Chumash. Sherman, Rabbi Nossion; Zotowitz, Rabbi Meir. Mesorah Publications, Ltd, 2007. P738